

What is claimed is:

1. An Internet-enabled appointment and reservation service system,
comprising:

5 an Internet-connected appointment server executing a software suite;
and

 one or more subscribing businesses to the service, the businesses
having receiving apparatus enabling receipt of appointment schedules from
the appointment server;

10 wherein the appointment server presents an interactive interface to
browsing clients, the interactive interface enabling the clients to select the
businesses and make an appointment or reservation with the businesses, and
wherein the appointment server periodically provides updated appointment
schedules to the subscribing businesses via the receiving apparatus.

15 2. The system of claim 1 wherein the receiving apparatus at individual ones
of the subscribing businesses comprises an Internet-capable personal
computer with a video display unit (PC/VDU).

20 3. The system of claim 2 wherein the PC/VDU executes software providing
[periodic] connection to the appointment server, downloading of updated
versions of an appointment schedule during the periodic connection, and
display of the appointment schedule on the video display unit.

25 4. The system of claim 1 wherein the appointment server groups subscribing
businesses into geographically-related groups and presents an interactive
series of interfaces to a client allowing the client to select a group.

5. The system of claim 4 wherein the appointment server, after a client selects a group, presents an interactive interface to the client presenting types of businesses in the selected group, enabling the client to select a business type.

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6. The system of claim 5 wherein the appointment server, after a client selects the business type, presents an interactive interface indicating individual businesses of the selected type to the client, enabling the client to select an individual business.

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7. The system of claim 6 wherein the appointment server, after the client selects the individual business, presents an interactive interface to the client, allowing the client to make an appointment with the business.

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8. The system of claim 6 wherein the indication of individual businesses includes multimedia advertising material for individual ones of the businesses.

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9. The system of claim 8 wherein the advertising material presents a hyperlink to a direction service for aiding a client in locating the business.

10. The system of claim 1 wherein the appointment server cooperates with a pager facility to page-alert clients of a scheduled appointment.

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11. A method for managing appointments for substantially service-related businesses, comprising steps of:

(a) presenting an interactive interface system to browsing clients by an Internet-connected appointment server executing a software suite, the

interactive interface system allowing clients to select among the subscribing businesses and to make an appointment or reservation with selected business; and

(b) periodically downloading an updated appointment schedule by the server to receiving apparatus at the subscribing businesses.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein, in step (b) the receiving apparatus at individual ones of the subscribing businesses comprises an Internet-capable personal computer with a video display unit (PC/VDU).

13. The method of claim 12 wherein in step (b) the PC/VDU executes software providing periodic connection to the appointment server, downloading of updated versions of an appointment schedule during the periodic connection, and display of the appointment schedule on the video display unit.

14. The method of claim 11 wherein in step (a) the appointment server groups subscribing businesses into geographically-related groups and presents an interactive series of interfaces to a client allowing the client to select a group.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein in step (a) the appointment server, after a client selects a group, presents an interactive interface to the client presenting types of businesses in the selected group, enabling the client to select a business type.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein in step (a) the appointment server, after a client selects the business type, presents an interactive interface indicating

individual businesses of the selected type to the client, enabling the client to select an individual business.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein in step (a) the appointment server, after
5 the client selects the individual business, presents an interactive interface to the client, allowing the client to make an appointment with the business.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein in step (a) the indication of individual
10 businesses includes multimedia advertising material for individual ones of the businesses.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein in step (a) the advertising material
presents a hyperlink to a direction service for aiding a client in locating the
business.

20. The method of claim 10 wherein the appointment server cooperates with
15 a pager facility to page-alert clients of a scheduled appointment.